

# METHOD OF THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE SELF ( ATMAN )

*By Swami Akhandananda Saraswati*

1. One saintly knower of Truth ( Brahman ) has said that the resolute discrimination 'I am not the body' itself is the contemplation of the Self; because the source of diverse concepts of man, Hindu, Brahmin, Sannyasin, female, male etc. is this body itself. He said that even if you can not discern, then also believe that the body-egoistic-entity is sitting on the earth and myself on the roof. Self is conscious (meaning knowing others and itself too) and body is material ( not knowing others and itself both; not to be confused-with non-living ). Their identification as well as association is Brahman ( Universal eternal consciousness ); evidently this is neither 'me' nor 'mine'. Then how are we concerned with its ascribed values and defects ?

2. As explained in methodological texts that—'earth gets dissolved in water'—this contemplation could be carried that in this universe there is no such thing as earth. Then body, living beings, forests, mountains, towns and earth will cease to exist. Water alone will be there. In the void of space blown by the motion of wind, dazzled by the light there will alone be one unlimited, unfathomable, unending, undivided great ocean. There will remain no earthly cause for the difference between you and me. This reflection will extricate you from the delusion of diversity. Self finding bliss in oneness, unalloyed, solitary witness,

3. Neither earth is there nor water, only light prevails. Whatever form, natural form-deformation and reformation are appearing—all are sports of light. Colour, form, corporeity-incorporeity all are beams of flooded light. Only brilliance of diamonds, lustre of gold, I am that effulgence, unadulterated witness consciousness.

4. This inspiration and expiration that is constantly happening in the body, is only the blissful sport of the entire wind with the appendage of the body. It is dancing lightly, at medium speed, violently consonantly and sometimes inconsonantly. Has respiration any existence apart from aggregate air? By its friction you get warmth, by its fluidity water, by its consolidation earth is formed. In fact our in-breathing and out-breathing is not individual air but aggregate one. Its revelling sport is this universe. Neither earth nor water, whatever exists is the transmutation fashion of air. Neither light nor warmth. Everything is the titillation [of air. In the infinitude of air is the dissolution of the physical specificity. Air is sometimes quiet and sometimes disquiet. Atman ( Self ) is its unattached resort: blissful in one Awareness.

5. Shri Udiababa Maharaj recommended to contemplate that 'I am not the body, I am space.' Its meaning is that I am not partite individual, am space of consciousness.

Ponder a bit on this topic now. Space is the material cause of air etc, in sequence. Sequence is the indicator of time and transformation of power. Same space is the basis of air etc. identified with spatiality. Significance of this is space time and causal substance being of one form is appearing as space. Space is in its whole manifestation one with it and in its distinctive form also separate from it. If this space is seen united with total consciousness in one form, then it is called Maheshwar ( Great God ). The total—egoistic Shaivas etc. experience this ( Maheshwar ) in the form of their ego and translate their experience as 'I am all-causing ( efficient ), material cause of all, all—controller,



basis of all, and of the true form of all, am Almighty'. Certainly by such reflection the identification with body is destroyed. Some persons call this complete self-knowledge, meaning our misguided and forgotten perfection has again been recognised. This conception of our sovereignty depends on specific repeated meditation. Really I am conscious Atman ( Self ), becoming causal body as God, total subtle body as Hiranyagarbha ( totality of all minds ) and gross universe goes by the term of Virat ( Total universe ). All names forms, divisions, thoughts, desires, powers, actions and substances are only my vibrations. Viewing from spiritual practice this contemplation is a very excellent state.

Considering from the view-point of Ultimate truth, inspite of this contemplation of space being the means of counteracting the partiteness, it is not the complete knowledge of eternal truth, because self-effulgent Self is of a different category than any seen object. The thing that is being enlightened by consciousness in awareness; the ground of its total absence is also consciousness. Therefore that object being perceived in the total absence of its topic is surely false and also of the nature of total absence. In the opinion of Vedanta total absence apart from the ground is not accepted; hence apart from Self there is neither total absence nor its opposite, meaning of this is that undivided Self as consciousness alone is Brahman ( universal eternal consciousness ) and besides this there is not a thing.

In such a situation, the import of this meditation that 'I am undivided space of consciousness' is only this that the delusion of identification of the seen and unseen ( seer ) caused by ignorance is silenced. Atman self-effulgent, non-dual is Brahman itself-all contemplations result in this experience only.

One formless power is the material cause of mundane existence consisting of all names and forms. That so long is imaginary from the point of view of effect as long no objection exists in imagining in it as transformation;

however when wisdom is acquired about the oneness and non-duality of non-specific existence and non-specific consciousness then causality is invalidated as also the imaginary material causal relation in existence. Same is true with regard to state, order, extension and foundation also. They endure as long as causality endures. On their invalidation permanence in time or wholeness in space is out of question. Upanishads explicitly have declared the falsity of container-contained relation. In such a situation meditational forms as 'I am pervading, am support, am cause, am indestructible, am truth, am consciousness, am effulgent, am loving, am non-dual etc. become unnecessary. The true essence is that functioning world consisting of name and form is merely an appearance. First one (seen) is invalid and second (seer) is valid. This unquestionable power of Self is Supreme Spirit.

The inescapable fruit of contemplating Self in the form of space consciousness is the most certain wisdom-knowledge.

6. Supposing a magician keeping himself out of sight displays such a marionette show that a living being is suspended in space by a fine thread. Let that being be an individual or totality, a ball or globe, from the infinite point-of-view its insignificance or significance, smallness or greatness, oneness or multiplicity including permanence-impermanence has no value at all.

Tied or hung with their own particular strings specific-general, character, merit-demerit, shape-dissshape and culture are being manifested. This is like the puppetry. Sun, moon, earth and universe are hung like the electric bulbs. Where is the thread of suspension? This is appearing as different for each one and sometimes for the collection as if were. This connecting electric wire in each instrument generates activity according to its ordained specificity. But in different threads-in subtle bodies what is that electricity (generating power)? The thread is the subtle body and the consciousness existing in the mind as Self is the



electricity. When we consider mind in each separate electric current of the common pool from the individual stand point then it is called Tejas or Sutratma (dream or mind consciousness) and Hiranyagarbha (collective mind consciousness) from the aggregate view-point. Above mentioned desire-aggregate, coloured with desire is the red (emotion) body of Hiranyagarbha. In this emotional body all divisions whether spatial, timely, or even material submerge and emerge. In fact there is no division of gross and subtle, all are merely mental emotions and in one vast non-spatial ocean of affection (redness) rise and fall or submergence-emergence occur. In this particular conscious form of vast mass electricity that resting and peaceful causal ocean is the centre of the entire rise and fall. It is a sort of unfathomable unlimited ocean of non-spatial waveless whiteness and there the electricity in the form of consciousness is also unmoving. In spite of it being the focus of all Lordship, it is also the peace centre. In it there is no form of contraction and expansion, no transformation nor growth, neither activity nor inactivity, neither gross nor subtle; however it is the source of all. It is the manifestation of consciousness but not perceptible. There perception and perceptible are one. This is the reason why when monist-believing-in-form start describing it many thoughtful seekers are deluded that it is Brahman (Total consciousness). This white light of the space of consciousness (चिदाभास) also appears in relationless, globe of Sun-like expansive blueness. This blue colour is not a substance; neither length breadth, nor beginning and dying with no measurement nor weight. This blueness is one Maya (Appearance without Existence)—a mere shadow.

It in its own form of witness appears without meaning or reference. When there is no other meaning, where is the question of relation? Again what is this shadow-Maya? What is this blueness? In the Self which is consciousness alone and which is self-luminous and bereft of enlightened-

enlightener relation; in it this shadow-Maya ( appearance without Existence ) is an impossible idea. Infinite awareness is Self and its freedom from grasped-grasping relation is this blueness. This redness ( affection or action ), whiteness ( knowledge or awareness ) and blueness ( infinitude ) are the flights of worldly intellectual concepts which are trying to search its source truth. From the final evaluation ( philosophically ), one who is their witness meaning 'I' or 'Self' which is true substance, in it this blueness of shadow Maya form has no validity whatever. All categories of space-time-matter do not touch infinite consciousness in any way. This awareness is non-dual, infinite, undivided, Brahman ( universal eternal consciousness ). In it is the final goal of all Vedantas and experiences. From the blueness to the gross universe everything is only our sparkling and dazzling. Neither existent nor non-existent. Unique, our own Self alone is.

7. For the seeker of knowledge of Upanishadic truth there is no need to accept Prakriti ( Separate Seen entity ) consisting of three constituents as propounded by Yoga and Sankhya. In the opinion of the Sankhya-Yoga philosophy itself the final form of constituents ( Gunas ) is not the Seen. They consider the constituents according to their activities and interpret Upanishads accordingly. Actually the Guna ( constituents ) being always indirect are not capable of being known by intimate experience are unproved by inference but known only through words. In this situation meaning of 'Prakriti' ( Separate seen entity from Self ) may be either appendage Maya of God or ignorance associated with individual. In a principle free from name and form the words Maya ( appearance ) and ignorance ( misapprehension ) are synonymous. In its unpartitioned form of topic both are absolutely absent. For this reason both are false and indescribable ( seen yet not there ). Therefore by the knowledge of ground ( Self ) their invalidating dissolution is secured.

Hence in Vedantic deliberation Maya ( Appearance ),



Avyakrit ( undeveloped ). Avyakta ( Invisible ) Prakriti ( Seen entity ), Pradhan ( the primary germ of nature ), Avidya ( nescience ), ignorance, delusion, and casual body etc are only synonymous words. For this reason there is no need at all for contemplating Satwa ( balance of activity and dullness ), Rajas ( activity ), and Tamas ( dullness ). By contemplating merely on Existence-knowledge-Bliss-Absolute progress in the knowledge of truth can be obtained. Look at our body. Below the umbilicus there is a division of the gross Pranava ( Letter Aum ॐ ). With the generative organ both the limbs are of the form of letter A ( अ ). Line connecting it with the umbilicus represents the letter U ( उ ) and Umbilicus itself is a form of point. This is gross Aumkara ( the letter ॐ ). This is perceptible and therefore predominantly material. Basis of action is existence, basis of thought is knowledge, basis of felicity is bliss-inherent in three is one Self, That is the aim-point meant for Aumkara ( symbolic letter Aum ). This is consciousness or awareness. Now look a little upwards. Both arms and centre part is the letter A ( अ ). Upto neck is letter U ( उ ) and point behind and centrally is cervical plexus ( विशुद्ध चक्र ) is a dot. The symbolic meaning of letter Aum inherent in these three is Self or knowing capacity. This is predominantly emotional subtle Aumkara. The Self inherent in gross letter Aum also constitutes the same one in subtle letter Aum. Consciousness in both ( gross and subtle ) is one. Observe still further upwards. Two eye brows and its centre connecting it with the nose is the letter A ( अ ). Connecting the root source of eyes is the letter U ( उ ). Centre ( ब्रह्मरन्ध्र ) is a point. This is causal Pranava ( Aum ). This is predominantly awareness or knowing capacity. Consciousness inherent in it is Self. That is the aim-point meaning of the letter Aum, In spite of the difference of shape of gross, subtle and causal part of letter Aum, its aim-point meaning of the symbolic letter Aum is one Self alone. All differences of space-time-substance etc appear in the triple body by the body and

through the body only. In pure consciousness space-time-substance are absolutely absent. Therefore, because of appearing in the ground of absolute absence they are false and invalidable. Self-consciousness is permanent perception and other than Self is invalidable appearance. This disregard for the invalidable appearance is the realisation is Self. This is also called contemplation of Self.

Translated by  
*Swami Anantanada Saraswati*